

I think the important thing to remember, too, is that since Republicans took control of the Congress in 1995, Federal education spending has exploded. This President is asking for more money for education than the previous President.

So we need to do those things. This is a direction in which we need to head. We need to do it now. I am getting a little exasperated, as many Members are, that we cannot seem to move forward. We were prepared last week to talk about this. We did not even get a chance to get to it. So we need to produce a bipartisan education proposal which accomplishes the goals of increasing accountability for student performance, supporting programs that work, reducing bureaucracy, increasing flexibility, and empowering parents. By focusing on solutions rather than rhetoric, we will be able to accomplish those things.

Mr. President, I yield the floor to my friend from Tennessee.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Will my colleague from Tennessee yield for 10 seconds?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Does the Senator yield?

Mr. FRIST. The Senator yields.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I do not think there is any order. My colleague from Tennessee was here first. I ask unanimous consent that I follow the Senator from Tennessee in the order of debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, are we in morning business?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. We were until 3 o'clock. We are now past that time.

BETTER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1.

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Wyoming and my colleague from Ohio for their superb statements on education. The first statement expressed the underlying principles of accountability and of local control, of flexibility, as we go forward. I would like to reiterate the plea of the Senator from Wyoming that we be allowed, by our vote tomorrow morning, to proceed to address the bill that is resting on each of our desks and is ready to go, the Better Education for Students and Teachers Act, which is S. 1, the bill on education and is really the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

I commend our colleague from Ohio for his superb statement over the last

30 minutes or so addressing some of the most important, fundamental aspects of education as we look at our young children and their health and their safety as part of the education process.

We do have a great opportunity before us. I have been in this body for the last 6 years, and we have discussed various aspects of education—higher education, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA. We attempted to reauthorize ESEA last year but unsuccessfully for a whole host of reasons.

I am delighted by the leadership of the President of the United States, President Bush, who made it the No. 1 agenda item in his campaign. And again and again, as he has met with people—I think in as many as 26 States thus far over the last 100 days—no matter what issue he has been talking about, he comes back to education, the importance of education, and specifically talking about public education for children in kindergarten through the 12th grade.

We do have a great opportunity if we are allowed to proceed. I plead with colleagues on both sides of the aisle that when we have this vote tomorrow morning we will be allowed to proceed to the bill so that over the next 2 weeks we can, in a mature, sophisticated, systematic way, address what I believe is important to every American. Clearly it is, if we look at the campaign for the Presidency, if we look at what has happened over the last 100 days.

It was 18 years ago the report came out that we all refer back to, when the United States was declared a nation at risk. All of that focused on education. That was identified 18 years ago. The unique thing that has occurred, whether you are Democrat or Republican on either side of the aisle, or Independent, is that all of us are slowly but really coming together for the first time, uniting and trying to solve the underlying problems, again, under the leadership of President Bush.

It is a unique time in that all the major programs are up for reauthorization: the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the other programs which are coming due over the next 18 months or so.

It is a unique time where the public has come together, and where both parties have come together under the leadership of the President. Also, the process allows us to address what we call a reauthorization.

Today there is general agreement in Washington that our historical approach to K-through-12 education policy is not working. It is broken. It needs repair. It deserves focus. It deserves reform if our goal is really to leave no child behind. It is time to do that.

That is why I believe we in this body have to focus on this, meaning starting today or tomorrow or this week, we have to consider serious change, substantial change, and not just have a

perpetuation of what we have done over the last 35 years since 1965 when ESEA was first passed.

As we all go back to our districts and our States all across America, including communities all across Tennessee, the mandate is very clear: Fix the problem. The problem is clear. The achievement gap is getting worse. We are not appropriately educating our children today.

We need to fix the problem, do whatever it takes, spend money, and, yes, invest more but make sure we spend it wisely. We need to focus on the child. And most importantly—because you can say all of that—we most do it now. We need to take the next 2 weeks to consider this legislation. It is the most important item before the U.S. Government, I would argue and most of the American people agree. So let's do it now. Let's stay on it. Let's go on it tomorrow morning and stay on it over the next several weeks until we finish.

There are lots of different principles that we can focus on as we address this issue. We will be debating everything from how much money to spend, to the individual programs, to how do we actually reform and conceptualize or reconceptualized education today.

I think most of us—not knowing what the specific amendments will be—will stress certain guiding principles as we go through the debate. I would like to mention several that are important to me.

The first principle will be this whole concept that we talked a little bit about last year in terms of flexibility and accountability. Those two words are key, and they mean lots of things to different people. But I think fundamentally when we say "flexibility," we mean freedom; and when we say "accountability," that is sort of the buzzword for results, achievement, learning. I think we have to tie that flexibility to accountability, or the results.

As we talk about Federal dollars—and the Federal dollars are not very much; they are only about 7 percent of the overall education dollar spent in our communities; but it is a clear-cut obligation—I believe that no longer should we attach strings to those Federal dollars unless the strings themselves are attached to demonstrable results. Those results are better education of our children in communities all across this country.

What is going to be different and is different in the underlying bill and in the negotiations over the last several weeks between both sides of the aisle is that, yes, we set the goal of accountability, of achieving those results, but how we get those results needs to be left to local communities. That means teachers and principals and parents and schools and communities. The how-to does not mean Washington, DC. It does not mean the Senate. It does not mean the Congress or even the President of the United States. The

how-to of education rests with flexibility, local control, local identification of needs.

A second principle that will guide me, once we are allowed to bring the bill to the floor, is the focus on the child. We say "don't leave any child behind," but then when we consider legislation, too often we look at systems, inputs, institutions, dollars, at the same time losing the focus on the child. When I say "focus on the child," I also mean focus on the family, on the parents, the people who care most about that child, on the teacher, all at the local level. We need to come back again and again to protect the interests of the children and their parents, without focusing first and foremost on what we do too often, and that is focusing on the bureaucracy, focusing on a monopoly, focusing on a status quo. So the underlying principle that is an important one for all of us is focusing on the people, the child and the parent.

The No. 1 concern of the Federal Government should be the education of our Nation's less fortunate children. Our obligation must be to those children and not to the system itself. If we continue to focus on the education of the child, that is the goal, that is the product, if we do that and don't focus on the bureaucracy or the institution or the system or the input, we will create a system that will allow innovation and optimism in terms of creativity and figuring out new ways to do things more effectively. There will be a stimulation of new thought, new ideas, new ways of thinking about how to educate children.

That ties into a whole series of practical approaches which are mentioned in this document we will debate, such as allowing more choice, more opportunity, discussing issues such as charter schools, the opportunity of supplementary services. If in a typical classroom a child is not learning, what sort of services should we give that child to supplement what everybody else is getting in the classroom; how is that paid for? Where should the supplementary services be available? Can Federal dollars be used for that? That will be the debate.

It all comes from focusing on the individual child, what they need, what works, and what does not work: No. 1, matching freedom with results; No. 2, focusing on the child.

No. 3 is information. We will have the opportunity to talk about information, but as I have been involved in the education debate, I have been impressed with the lack of good, accurate, and timely information that is available to people who are interested in the education of the child. That might be to teachers; it might be to parents, it might be to school board members. The lack of that timely and accurate information is something we absolutely must address. I am convinced that if we give the flexibility and control that is necessary at the local level, people can make prudent decisions if they have accurate data.

Is one school better than another school? Is one teacher better than another teacher? Are children in one group in similar situations being educated better than other children? If so, why? That means we do have a Federal role to supply that information in an accurate and timely way.

Learning what is working, what is not working, that in itself will stimulate innovation and will stop us from rewarding failure. Again, rewarding failure by continually funneling money into systems that are not working year after year has to be changed, and it will be changed once we associate the fact that there are children trapped in schools that are failing in spite of everything that society can do for them. Over time we can no longer reward that failure. We need to continue to invest in that school. We need to give that school every opportunity to improve. If it does not, we need to no longer reward what is failing with Federal dollars, what is trapping individuals, maybe in a dangerous school, maybe an unsafe school, or a school where learning is not taking place.

A fourth guiding principle for me will be that we in the Federal Government do have a very important role. People ask me when I go back home: What is the Federal role? Why are you, a Senator, so interested in education? Why do you believe so strongly in this bill called Better Education for Students and Teachers Act? The answer is pretty clear. The Federal role is to inspire. It is to empower. It is to set the tone and the tenure out of Washington that says: Leave no child behind.

It expresses a willingness to appropriately invest in leaving no child behind. What goes on in this Chamber, what goes on in Washington, DC—and we have heard it from the President of the United States, who has made this the leading issue in his Presidency and in the initial campaign—is that education is important and is a high priority. If it is a high priority for the Senate, for this President, for the Congress, it will be, because of the bully pulpit, because of the leadership, it will be a high priority in Tennessee, in our States around the country, in our communities, in our school districts and, clearly, in our schools. We have to speak on behalf of needy children and their families. We need to spotlight the things that work but also shine that light on areas that do not work.

The Federal role, indeed, is setting those priorities, setting the tone and the content which becomes the national discussion on education. It will be a part of setting that momentum for reform. The reform train is under way in our local communities, but we must hop on that train and accelerate the momentum as we look to the future.

I mention these principles—I will close because there are other Members who wish to speak—pleading with my colleagues to allow this bill to come to the floor. This initiative is important to each and every one of us. If there is

disagreement in some way on substance or on policy, let us bring it to the floor. Let us talk about it. There has been a lot of debate over the last several days on the adequate level of funding to accomplish these higher standards, eliminating or reducing the achievement gap, leaving no child behind. I hope we can bring that to the floor and debate it and through that discussion, through the amendment process, we will come to a conclusion where, indeed, we will leave no child behind.

Matching freedom with results, focusing on the children, keeping information current and flowing, recognizing that we in the Federal Government have a very important role, are the principles I will use as we go forward in this very important debate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to follow Senator WELLSTONE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I ask unanimous consent that I may follow the Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, the only thing I want to mention is, I don't think I will take much more time, but I didn't say 20 minutes. I think I will probably stay within that framework, although with the Senator from Arkansas out on the floor, it will take some teaching on my part to get him to look at this in the right way. So it may take a few hours. Seriously, I think I can do it in about 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered. First, the Senator from Minnesota, then the Senator from Arkansas, and then the Senator from Massachusetts will be recognized.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I want to try to present a little bit of data. First, I will talk about this motion to proceed. There are others who will speak on this. I think Senator KENNEDY, of course, is the most prominent one who can speak to the state of the negotiations. Originally, my objection to proceeding before the spring recess was that I wanted to see what was in the bill. That includes policy and there are legitimate concerns and differences of opinion about that—for example, the Straight A's Block Grant Program. There are other concerns about language dealing with testing.

I also want to know exactly what we are talking about by way of resources to, in fact, make sure that these children we are going to test every year have the same opportunity to do well.

I don't want to see the Senate do something which could be very reckless, and I want to know what is in this legislation. So my objection has been, and remains, that it doesn't make sense to proceed to a bill unless you

know what is in it. That is really what I have been saying. That is what I say today on the floor of the Senate. We need to have a chance to look at what is in this bill.

Mr. President, my second point is that I am in profound disagreement with many of the things that I am hearing on this bill from some of my colleagues. I am in, I guess, angry disagreement with Senators who say that this is "reform" and this is all about—to quote my colleague from Tennessee—"appropriately invest to leave no child behind."

If we are going to now have a Federal mandate—and quite frankly, I am amazed at the number of Senators, especially on the other side of the aisle, who now are going to vote for a Federal mandate that will say to every school district in every State, not just Title I schools that they must proceed with these tests. This isn't just about Title I schools, this is about testing every child in every school district in every State every year starting from age 8 to age 13. Who knows where that comes from, based upon what research, what philosophy?

If that is going to be a Federal mandate handed down to every school district in every school in the State of Minnesota, I want to put my colleagues on notice. I will, in every way I know how to as a Senator, insist that we have another Federal mandate that goes with it, which would be that there will be equality of opportunity for every child to get a good education and to succeed and to do well.

But, do you know what? We are not going to do that. We are not going to do that. Now, let me just start out with the President's budget. The President's budget provides a \$669 million net increase. So far that is what we have seen over the last fiscal year for the ESEA program—\$669 million with \$575 million in new money for title I.

The title I program for disadvantaged children is funded at a 30-percent level. As a matter of fact, you would probably need to get close to \$24 billion or thereabouts per year to fully fund Title I. We are at one-third that level. The President adds \$575 million, and it is "Leave no child behind"? Can you explain to me how? No additional money for reading, for smaller classes, for teaching assistants to help these children is there. Some of my colleagues say: "We have spent all this money on title I over the years." One-third of the children who should be helped are helped!

By the way, the amount of money we spent on title I over the years amounts to one-half of 1 percent of all the money we spent on education in our country during that time. It is hard to blame one program for not leveraging huge progress in this area. But at the very minimum, since this is what the Federal Government is about, how about a commitment to fully fund title I?

I will have a triggering amendment on the floor of the Senate that will say

that we cannot mandate testing for every child in every school district in every State until we first fully fund title I. It seems to me that if you are going to be serious about leaving no child behind, you would want to make sure all these children have the same opportunity. Let's truly leave no child behind. My colleagues are trying to argue we are going to realize that goal on a tin cup education budget.

Now, if you are going to start measuring how children are doing as young as age 8, third graders, it is crystal clear that the most important variables in explaining how these children are going to do, is what happens to them before kindergarten. I am ashamed to say this. Right now, the Congress funds Head Start at a 50-percent level. Early Head Start, 1 and 2 years old—where we say it is even more important to get it right for these children from low-income families—is funded at a 3-percent level. Like Fannie Lou Hamer, the civil rights leader from Mississippi, said, "I am sick and tired of being sick and tired." I am sick and tired of playing symbolic politics with children's lives.

I am going to fight like I never fought in my life as a Senator on this issue. The President's budget is going to leave no child behind? There is no significant increase in Head Start funding. We are going to humiliate these children, fail these children, fail the schools, fail the teachers, and then we are going to blame them, after we don't put forward the resources.

We should be a player in prekindergarten. We should get real about Head Start. We should get real about developmental child care and about making sure these children are kindergarten ready. But no, no, no, no, no. What we have instead is Robin-Hood-in-reverse tax cuts with over 40 percent of the benefits going to the top 1 percent. So President Bush doesn't have any money to invest in these children.

Where is this additional significant investment in education for children to make sure they all can do well on these tests?

The IDEA program: We are nowhere close to the \$17 billion a year that represents the 40-percent commitment the Federal Government made to our school districts. What do we get in the President's budget? We get in the President's budget an additional \$1 billion, barely half of the 40-percent commitment we said as the Federal Government we would make.

We are supposed to go forward with this legislation that sets up a Federal mandate that requires every school district to give these tests. But at the same time, we are not investing the resources to make sure there is equality of opportunity for every one of these children to do well in these tests. My colleagues call that "reform"? And they have the nerve to say this is realizing the goal of leaving no child behind? We cannot realize the goal of leaving no child behind on a tin cup

education budget. This is symbolic politics with children's lives.

I say to the Presiding Officer, I am amazed that all of a sudden there is this support for this Federal mandate to tell every school district in every State that they are going to do this testing. It is a gigantic unfunded mandate because of what I just said: We are not living up to our commitment to provide the kids and the teachers with resources so they can do well.

I am going to have a number of amendments, and I think there will be strong support. I have delved into this testing issue. I know Senator KENNEDY has been working hard on this. We absolutely have to make sure this testing is done the right way so that we do not have single, low-quality standardized tests being used in the states.

I can quote from all sorts of studies. I will wait for that when the amendments come up. I tell my colleagues, everybody who is involved in the testing field, all of the studies that we ourselves have commissioned to look at "high-stakes testing," warn us: You better do this right. You better have multiple measurements.

You better make sure this is not rote memorization.

You better make sure you do not force teachers into drill education, which is teaching the test, and which is going on all over the country.

You better make sure you truly are measuring the depth of knowledge of children.

You better make sure you take into account those children who come from families where English is a second language.

You better take into account children who have learning disabilities, something with which I have struggled and which has affected me on these tests.

Mr. President, did you know that the National Association of State Boards of Education has determined the total cost to States to develop and implement 3 through 8 assessments could be as high starting out as \$7 billion? If the simplest tests are used—which will be, frankly, an abuse of testing—the minimum cost would be \$2.7 billion.

Do you know, Mr. President, what the President has budgeted for testing for the school districts? It is \$320 million. I say to my Republican colleagues, I am amazed you are willing to vote for this unfunded mandate. I am amazed.

I say to my Democratic colleagues, I am amazed that we would go forward unless we first have some ironclad commitment from the President and from our colleagues that we will, in fact, also live up to our commitment to provide the resources for these children and these teachers and these schools.

We cannot do one without the other. We cannot move forward with legislation until we know what is in it. We cannot move forward with legislation until we have some agreement on some of the policy questions some of us are raising.

Let me, one more time—I think I can do it in 2 or 3 minutes—spell out my position.

We must do testing the right way. Right now I think there is every reason to believe that this is a rush to recklessness. If we do not do the testing the right way, we are going to drive teachers out of teaching. We want to get the best teachers. In fact, when I am in schools—I have averaged being in a school about once every 2 weeks for the last 10½ years—I ask the students what makes for good education.

Before smaller class size, before even repairing dilapidated buildings, before discussion of good textbooks and technology, they say good teachers. They all say we want to attract the best and the brightest. Please think this through. We want to attract the best and the brightest, but we are going to say to the best and the brightest: When you teach—I have two children who teach—we are going to tell them when to teach, how to teach, and what to teach. You and your students are going to be measured by these tests every single year. Many of them will be standardized tests, simple, and everybody is going to be forced into worksheet teaching, drill education.

We already know who is not doing as well. Suburban schools are doing well and the kids are doing well and thank God for that. It is the rural and the inner city where we have the most trouble. It is in those areas where we have the most trouble recruiting the teachers. Guess what. The best and the brightest are not going to go into teaching. What in the world do we think we are doing? That is my first point.

My second point is, if we are going to do the testing right, the National Association of State Boards of Education said it could cost, starting out, as much as \$7 billion, and we have, Mr. President—and I appreciate your attention; thank you for your graciousness—we have from the President's proposal \$320 million. That is an unfunded mandate. Any good conservative, much less flaming liberal, should vote against this on that basis alone, unless you have that investment in paying for these tests.

I will have a triggering amendment. Right now we are spending 30 percent of what it would take to do title I. I am going to have an amendment that says until we fully fund title I so that the children from the disadvantaged backgrounds—those are the ones not doing as well. Is anybody surprised? Are you surprised? They do not come to kindergarten as ready. They do not have the same breaks. They do not go to the schools which have all the facilities. They do not go to the schools with the most highly qualified teachers, although I must say, some of the teachers I have seen in the inner city and rural schools are saints. As a matter of fact, I hear discussions about accountability. Some of the harshest critics in the Senate of these public school

teachers could not last 1 hour in the classrooms they condemn.

At the very minimum, let's get real. If we are going to have these tests, do it the right way. If we are going to have these tests, hold everybody accountable. Then also make sure there is another Federal mandate that there will be equality of opportunity for every child to have a good education and succeed.

Therefore, with my amendment, this cannot be implemented. They cannot have this Federal mandate of testing every year until we first fully fund title I. Let's give these children and schools the resources they need.

By the way, I am thinking seriously of other triggering amendments. Another one is we cannot do the testing until we fully fund Head Start. The truth is, that is the place to start. Before the Chair came in, I said right now it is 50 percent of the kids and that is it. In early Head Start, it is 3 percent. That is for the 1-year-olds and 2-year-olds.

I might have another triggering amendment—for sure I will have one on title I—that says until we fund the IDEA program, we cannot go forward with this testing.

There are plenty of reasons not to proceed.

I don't want to proceed on a piece of legislation that I haven't yet seen. The language is technical. Frankly, we could be making a major change in the Federal role in education. I want to see the language. I don't think we should rush through this. This issue is too important. In addition, we should know exactly the agreements on the policy questions.

I do not believe we should go forward with this legislation, this Federal mandate, to test every child, unless we also have a Federal mandate, backed up by resources, that there will be equality of opportunity for every child to have a good education and to succeed. We can't do one without the other. I know for a fact this administration is not willing to make that investment. I have seen nothing on the table because of the commitment to these Robin-Hood-in-reverse tax cuts.

I am opposed to 42 percent of the benefits going to millionaires; I prefer more money into title I, special reading, additional help. I prefer more resources into afterschool programs. I prefer more resources into prekindergarten, into kids, into opportunities for every child in America. It is not in this bill.

Please don't make the mistake of believing that a test guarantees good teachers. It doesn't. A test doesn't rebuild crumbling buildings. A test doesn't bring technology to schools. A test doesn't provide the resources for children with special needs. A test doesn't provide smaller class size. A test doesn't provide counseling and support of services for children.

Where is the commitment to these resources? This is not reform; this is a

charade; this is a mockery. I am indignant. I am determined to over and over and over and over again come to the Senate with amendments to make my case. I don't mean I take it as a foregone conclusion we will move to the bill, but I oppose the bill until I know what is in it and until I know whether there is an agreement. In fact, if I lose on such a vote, I will come to the floor with amendments, over and over and over again, to fight for what I truly believe.

I say to my colleague from Arkansas, since we are not always in agreement, I truly believe it is necessary to realize the goal of leaving no child behind.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COCHRAN). Under the previous order, the Chair recognizes the Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Senator WELLSTONE may have made the greatest understatement in the Senate, when he said we may not always agree.

I have the utmost respect for my friend. It is always a challenge following the Senator from Minnesota. He is passionate and articulate. I have the utmost respect for his convictions, though I think in this instance he is misguided.

I rise to speak in favor of the education bill from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, the Better Education for Students and Teachers Act. I look forward to engaging in what I think will be a healthy and vigorous debate throughout this week and perhaps next week.

Certainly Senator WELLSTONE and I agree that this issue is important. I think all colleagues on both sides of the aisle agree this is an issue that deserves the time we have reserved on the floor; it deserves the debate that has begun. I am confident we will be able to pass the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and we will pass a bill under the direction of our President, under his leadership, that will reform the American educational system and the Federal role in public education, and we will turn away from those who simply would endorse the status quo and continue down the path of the past.

While the legislation before the Senate makes significant reforms, we have been working with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make several needed improvements to the bill that came from the committee. It is essential this legislation not merely rubberstamp the policies the Federal Government has encouraged for many years. During 35 years of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Washington created a lot of programs; in fact, one study in the House of Representatives shows over 700 Federal education programs. We have a burgeoning education bureaucracy. The Federal Government has spent 35 years and over \$120 billion on title I funding to increase the achievement of disadvantaged students, and that was the reason the NAEP was originally authorized. That

is why we started a Federal role in education. We wanted to help disadvantaged students. If there is a proper Federal role, it is to target scarce resources toward the most disadvantaged and to narrow the learning gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged students.

After 35 years and the \$120 billion on title I funding for disadvantaged students, we have little, if anything, to show for that investment. Let's recount the facts.

First, as a prelude to what I will say, I emphasize there are many quality teachers in public schools. There are some incredibly dedicated teachers who are doing a tremendous job in public schools. I agree with one thing Senator WELLSTONE said. I would not last an hour trying to fill their shoes in the difficult job they have. My sister is such a person. I admire her immensely. She will never have her name in any headlines, but, day in and day out for 20 years, she has been in the classroom, teaching and instructing and brightening the lives of young people. She deserves, as thousands of public educators across this country, our praise.

We have made their job more difficult. We have left children behind. That is what we need to remedy. The most recent NAEP reading results for 2000 remain the same—not for 1999, the same as for 1992. The worst news in the scores for 2000 was that higher performing students made gains while lower performing students did even worse. In other words, what we were supposed to try to cure with our Federal prescription for education when we created the Elementary and Secondary Education Act 35 years ago we have only made worse. The situation has only been exacerbated. Instead of narrowing that learning gap, we have seen the learning gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged only increase.

American 12th graders rank 19th out of 21 industrial countries in mathematics. Only Cyprus and South Africa fare worse than the United States. I say to my colleagues who want to spend more money, let's not spend more money unless we bring reform. That is unacceptable. For the greatest nation in the world, the freest nation in the world, and, without risk of being contradicted, the Nation that has the best higher education program in the world, to have those statistics for our elementary and secondary education system is unacceptable.

Since 1983, 10 million American kids reached 12th grade without having learned to read at the basic level; 20 million seniors could not do basic math; 25 million seniors are illiterate on the subject of American history. How long can a free society survive, how long can a democracy survive, when our young people do not have a basic understanding of our Nation's roots, our Nation's history?

What about the middle school grades? Two-thirds of American eighth graders perform below proficiency level

in reading. It is not just the high schools; it is not just in the middle schools; it is also in our elementary schools that our children have been shortchanged by a Washington-based, cubicle-oriented system. Over three-quarters of fourth grade children in urban high-poverty schools read below basic on the National Assessment of Education Progress, the NAEP test. Those kids in particular title I was intended to help the most—the disadvantaged children, those in urban schools, those in high-poverty schools—and they are the children who are suffering most under the current system. Those statistics are shameful.

Two years ago when the Children's Scholarship Foundation, a private scholarship fund, offered 40,000 scholarships for tuition, privately funded—they offered 40,000 scholarships across the Nation—1.25 million applications were received. Even though families were required under this program to make a matching contribution of \$1,000 from their own pockets, they still had one and a quarter million applicants.

Talk about a poll. That is perhaps the best poll on the failure of the current system.

In many urban districts, the demand for these scholarships was so high that a staggering 44 percent of eligible parents in Baltimore applied for these scholarships and 33 percent of the parents in Washington, DC, applied for these scholarships. There are only 40,000; one and a quarter million applicants. In the most poor communities, parents are just not satisfied with their schools.

When you look at the past, you look at what the Federal Government has tried, you can only say we have been weighed in the balance and we have been found wanting. We have a golden opportunity to change that story this year. Child-based education is the focus, I believe, of the pending legislation. We have a bill for consideration that is about educating America's children, not keeping a failing and dilapidated education infrastructure on life support. The bill before us pioneers a new direction for the Federal Government's role in education. Is it not time for a new direction?

The package that some of my colleagues and I have been working on, which includes several initiatives such as what we called Straight A's, what President Bush calls Charter States, will be offered as an amendment if not negotiated in the talks that are ongoing.

Supplemental services for children in failing schools: No, it is not a full parental choice provision, as the President suggested, but it is a step toward giving parents with children in failing schools—where the schools have been given an opportunity and have been given resources, and the schools will not teach and the schools will not change—to give those parents an opportunity to not sacrifice their children in that failing school but to have

some other option, some supplemental services, some Sylvan Learning Centers, tutorial help, to ensure that their children are not lost in a failing school system.

But I hear from the other side of the aisle that these reforms are not enough; that what is really needed is more money. I suggest that will be the mantra we will hear over and over and over again this week in response to the President's leadership and in response to real education reform. We are going to hear over and over again: No, what we really need is more money.

Let's talk about that. Even though over \$120 billion has been spent on title I over the past 35 years, even though we have seen no measurable gain in student achievement over those 35 years, the argument is still the real solution is to spend more money. Even though the President in his budget has included an 11-percent increase for education, more than any other Department in the entire Federal Government, and even though he has suggested tripling funding for reading programs in those lower grades, we will still hear over and over again: The real issue is not reform. The real issue is we need to spend more money.

Let's continue to talk about that funding issue. I suggest while more money is desirable, it is not desirable if we do not yoke it with real education reform. This chart from the National Center for Education Statistics reveals what is happening. On NAEP reading scores since 1971, you can see that while we have more than doubled spending—the red line—more than doubled spending on education on a per-pupil basis, over \$8,000 per pupil, these lines reveal the real story. It is that 12th grade NAEP reading, since 1971, has remained basically static; 8th grade NAEP reading—the green line—since 1971 has remained stationary; and on the 4th grade NAEP reading, we have essentially a flat line as well.

So while, since 1971, we have more than doubled, in inflation-adjusted dollars, what we are spending per pupil, the result has been no significant progress.

Let's go from reading to the math scores. The NAEP math scores tell essentially the same story. Since 1973, spending has increased from about \$5,000, \$6,000, to over \$8,000. We have a considerable increase over the years on the per-pupil expenditure. Yet you can see in the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades, the scores remain, tragically, a flat line.

I suggest the evidence is overwhelming that money is simply not the answer. Last year's Rand Corporation State-by-State comparison of test scores on annual spending per student on education, scores adjusted for demographics and cost-of-living differences across the States, shows that schools do not thrive on money alone. Texas ranked 24th among the States on yearly spending per student, but they were first in test results on the 1990-1996 NAEP test. Iowa was 21st in spending,

but they were third in results. On the other hand, Louisiana was 14th in spending per student, but they were 47th in results. There is simply no persuasive correlation between the amount spent and the academic achievement of students.

It is time for us to move in a new direction. I say money alone is not the answer to all our problems. I am spending so much time on that because I know that is what we are going to hear all week long. We must take a balanced, responsible approach to education reform. Funding where needed is important, but we can already find plenty of examples of innovative schools that do not have a wealth of funding. The Heritage Foundation published a book entitled "No Excuses." This book tells the story of 21 high-performing high-poverty schools. One of those schools is in Portland, AR; the Portland Elementary School. I will give you an idea of where it is located. This, as the Presiding Officer right now well knows, is the Mississippi Delta. On both sides of the Mississippi River is, I think, unquestionably the poorest regional area on a per-capita-income basis in the entire Nation. More so than even Appalachia is the Mississippi Delta. It is a struggling area in every way, economically and educationally.

This school, the Portland Elementary School, is located right here in Portland, AR, in southeast Arkansas. This school is led by a principal by the name of Ernest Smith. The Portland Elementary School, located in the Mississippi Delta, has found high academic results. Oftentimes those are not expected in this region of the country. They have found these results by demanding academic achievement from every child in the school. Portland Elementary has only 150 students in pre-kindergarten through the 6th grade. Mr. President, 77 percent of the students are from low-income homes. When Ernest Smith came to Portland 5 years ago, half of the students in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades were scoring 2 years or more below grade level. Today 100 percent of the students in this elementary school are at grade level or above.

I want everyone to see this principal. This is Ernest Smith, an engaged principal who has transformed this elementary school in the Mississippi Delta.

How did this remarkable turnaround happen? A dedicated principal, a school district willing to try something different, and teachers who were supportive of the approach—not a Federal program telling this principal what he should do. In fact, it had been his experience that the Federal programs oftentimes got in his way.

Ernest Smith is 65 years old. He has been a teacher and a principal for 43 years. This is what he did. He convinced the school to implement an instructional model called Direct Instruction, and test scores have risen ever since he did it. Additionally, parents who enrolled their children in pri-

vate schools in the area started to call Mr. Smith to enroll their children back in the local public school.

But Direct Instruction was not the only reason for the improvements in the school. Mr. Smith has increased parental involvement in the school, where 50 percent of the parents attend a monthly parents meeting, and 98 percent of the parents attended the parent-teacher conferences. In addition, more time during the schoolday was dedicated to direct involvement between the students and teachers. Mr. Smith realized when children are at school they should be learning, so recesses and naptimes were shortened or cut out.

On their most recent standardized tests from this spring, kindergartners scored at the 88th percentile nationally.

It is the poorest region of our Nation and the most educationally challenged region of our Nation. However, the 88th percentile for kindergarten is not good enough for principal Ernest Smith. His goal is the 100th percentile for every student.

You can see in kindergarten, grades 1, 2, and 3—in every grade—in this elementary school, they are exceeding the national average, the 50th percentile. Once again, his desire is to see 100.

Luke Gordy, chairman of the Arkansas Board of Education, said in an editorial written in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette in reference to Ernest Smith and Betty McGruder, principal at Whitten Elementary, "they have accepted no excuses for raising levels of learning for every child under their care." They believe they must learn.

I suggest to my colleagues that money alone is not the answer. This school doesn't have a lot of money. They have very little money. They are on a very tight budget. Their answer wasn't give us more money, but give us the freedom to make the kinds of reforms in which teachers are going to be allowed to teach.

Having served in the State legislature and worked with local school boards, I don't subscribe to the notion that Washington is somehow all-knowing and that we policymakers on the Education and Labor Committee are somehow omniscient. Washington is not omniscient, and we are not perfect in knowing what is going to meet the needs of schools all over this country.

This bill that we are debating requires accountability and student performance measures in exchange for flexibility and discretion by States and local schools. That is something the current system just does not have. The current system is a straightjacket for local educators. This system puts these local educators in handcuffs and says: This is the way you must do it—that we must prescribe from Washington, DC. Rather than out-of-touch bureaucrats here in Washington pulling the funding stream, the funding would be allocated under this bill directly to States and school districts. Funds

would be consolidated so that schools would have to spend less time filling out grant forms, and so they could spend more time teaching.

The Presiding Officer directing our deliberations knows as well on our committee that we had the Secretary of Education come before us on more than one occasion and repeatedly he reminded Members of the Senate that his background is as a hands-on educator, superintendent, principal, someone who has been there, and someone who sees it from a different perspective than what we too often see coming out of the Federal Department of Education. I think that is refreshing. I think that is going to assist us in the path we have before us.

I think the facts are so clear and the message is so strong that proponents of the status quo realize that change is coming. People are realizing that President Bush's plan makes sense, that it is going to bring real change, and that it is going to take us in a new direction. I am glad my colleagues have started to embrace the President's positions. I only hope these initiatives become stronger, not weaker, as we go through the debate in the next couple of weeks.

With millions of American students struggling to read, with millions of American students struggling to recite basic history facts or exhibit basic mathematical skills, one would hope we could collectively agree that we must try something different and we must collectively put our emphasis on student performance. We can do that by passing the pending legislation.

An editorial op-ed piece written by Joel Belz—I don't know Joel Belz, but I thought he had a wonderful analogy of what we are facing, and those who are going to oppose this bill are setting themselves up against change. This is the way he put it. He said:

Advocates of statist education are like the older people in the Soviet empire in the early 1990s.

This is Joel Belz. I am not impugning anybody's integrity.

He said:

They're vaguely aware their system isn't working—but they've never known anything else. Even worse, statism has dulled their creative powers, as it always does, and they can't imagine anything other than what they've always known. Their only solution is to multiply their efforts. "Let's do more of the same—much more," they proclaim cheerlessly. "If only we had more money to buy more of what we've already got, maybe it would work." But it's like pushing boulders up the long slope of a mountain.

But the forces that resist real change will repeatedly fall back on: We just need to do more of what we have been doing for the last 35 years, if we will just put more money in—while they defend this deteriorating education bureaucracy and infrastructure that impedes reform instead of energizing reform.

Flexibility means freedom. Accountability means you have to measure. After you measure and you discover

and determine where the failing schools are, there must be consequences. There must be ultimately more parental choice.

It has been said that the last seven words of any dying institution are, "We never did it that way before." We will hear that disguised in various ways and in various euphemisms. We will hear that this week: "We never did it that way before." The real solution is, we need more money. The President agrees. Let's put in more resources. But the President has rightly put his finger on the problem: Most basically we need reform.

Testing: Yes. Testing, because as fallible as it is, it is the best tool we have of determining if our children are really learning.

Flexibility: Yes. Because, as in welfare, the great reform that is occurring in education is happening not in Washington, DC, but in the States—our laboratories all across this country.

Parental choice: Ultimately parents are still the first and best educators. They need to have the opportunity to ensure that their children are not shuffled through a system in which their children are the ultimate sacrifice.

I believe that ultimately when this debate is brought before the American people, and when it is brought before the Senate, the energy and the impetus for real reform that our President has given us will result in the most dramatic and fundamental change in the Federal role in education since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was first passed and since the Department of Education was created. That is good news for children all across our country who are being left behind.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). Under the previous order, the Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I want to give an update to our colleagues about the efforts to resolve some final items in the pending Elementary and Secondary Education bill negotiations.

As my friend from Minnesota pointed out earlier, we don't have the final product. We have legislation that was reported out of Committee, but at the time of reading of the Committee bill and the report, there were a number of additional areas we were tasked to try to resolve, if we could, in order to be able to fairly represent the best judgment of the President of the United States and the Committee.

That has been an ongoing process. Members of our Education Committee, as well as other Senators—including Senator LIEBERMAN and Senator BAYH—indicated a particular interest to our leadership. A number of our colleagues, as well as the majority leader's staff will be very much involved in these negotiations.

I was interested in the statements and comments made last Friday about the state of these negotiations by the

majority leader, because they really did not reflect what I think has been the ongoing effort that all of us have been making to find common ground in this very important area of public policy.

I must say that I think we have moved in a very significant way in trying to listen to each position and work through some of the differences.

I think in the area of policy conclusions we have made very important and substantial progress. It does not reflect all of my priorities. I would have liked to have seen a good deal more investment in smaller class sizes and school construction and modernization. I would like to see firmer language for professional development, and some other areas as well. I will speak to those items when the legislation is considered by the full Senate.

But we have made important progress in a number of very important areas, particularly in putting the final touches on the accountability and Straight A's compromise. We resolved the key issues on bilingual education, on after-school programs, on teacher quality, supplementary services, on report cards, and on testing.

The points that my friend, Senator WELLSTONE, mentioned about ensuring good quality testing is going to still be a matter that I hope we can address in the Chamber. I think the examples he gave about these quick, slick, easy tests that are easily taught do not really test the depth of a child's mind and their ability to really develop his or her grasp of different educational concepts are telling. There are many good tests that are being given. I think the NAEP test that is given in my own State of Massachusetts, is a high-quality test. We've worked through important language in the assessment area.

Senators may need to meet tomorrow though to work through remaining items that have not been resolved at the staff level. But, I still say to my colleagues, we have not reached a final agreement on the question of funding.

As we have heard from a number of our colleagues, I stand with those who believe that having the changes in policy are important, but to really breathe life into changes provided for in this bill, we need to have the adequate funding.

I listened to my colleague from Arkansas talk about money, money, money—that is what others are going to say. The fact is, it isn't just us on this side of the aisle who are talking about enhanced resources. In any fair, open examination of the number of children who need the services that we are trying to provide, and who are not receiving those services, if we are going to cover them, it is going to take an investment. It is as simple as that.

We are only reaching a third of the nation's neediest children. We say in our legislation, on page 41, that there must be a timeline for ensuring that each group of students must meet or exceed the State's proficient level of

performance on the State assessment—within 10 years from the date of enactment. Ten years is mentioned throughout this piece of legislation—this is the commitment, that we are going to have proficiency for the economically challenged children of this country who present severe needs in our society. If we are going to meet our responsibility, it is going to take additional resources.

I listened to my colleague, Senator HUTCHINSON, talk about the Sylvan Learning Centers services that are offered to students across the nation. It costs \$38 an hour for those services, and approximately 50 hours over the course of a school year in order for a student to show improvement. That adds up to \$1,900 a year for extra services to one child. Sylvan guarantees that after 36 hours of learning session, children go advance one grade level.

We know that without adequate funding we're still going to be failing to respond to the needs for supplementary services for children.

As we begin this debate we need to understand what is really missing in the legislation. We are not reaching one-third of the children eligible for supplemental assistance. This Administration has made a commitment to ensure that all children will be guaranteed at least the benefits of this legislation. If done well and right, that will mean a well-trained teacher in the classroom, a reformed curriculum, tough accountability, and the opportunity for parents to understand how well their children are doing or not doing, and how well that school is doing or not doing.

We seek strong accountability of schools, of teachers, and of children. The question is, Are we going to be accountable? Are we going to be accountable for ensuring that all the children are going to be covered? I think that is the fundamental issue in terms of funding. Unless we are going to do that, we do a real disservice to the children in this country.

This is not going to be the only education debate we are going to have.

We also understand the importance of early intervention programs for children. I was very disappointed that the President's budget eliminated the early education program. This is a program that was supported by Senator STEVENS, Senator JEFFORDS, myself, Senator DODD, and Senator KERRY—a strong bipartisan program that gave a great deal of flexibility. It includes part of our effort to try to make sure children are going to be ready to learn when they enter school. As all the various studies, including the Carnegie Commission reports, demonstrate that early intervention add immeasurably to children's interest in learning, their ability to learn, and in the development of their interpersonal skills.

If we say we are going to benefit from the knowledge that we have discovered over recent years, we ought to be supporting early intervention for children,

and in many instances, for parents. Many times, particularly in the areas of reading, parents also have difficulty reading. Some of the most successful reading programs involve parents as well as the children.

We are also going to come back to the debate on the funding of the Head Start Program. We are still in some States, only serving 40 to 43 percent of eligible children. In some major urban centers in our country approximately 25 percent of the children that are eligible to go to Head Start, are able to find the slots to do so.

The Head Start Program has been examined, and it has been shown that the benefits from it in the early education years, add immeasurably to the child's development during the period of their education, and can even last through middle school and high school, if done and well supported.

Many of us are disheartened, from recent studies on child care, which show a high level of turnover that is taking place in Head Start Programs. Some children are exposed to two or three teachers over the course of one year. This means confusion to the children and a lost opportunity.

Early intervention is key for enhanced academic achievement for the children, and in many respects are as important as many of the issues we are going to be dealing with in the Elementary and Secondary Education act.

I am strongly committed to a strong partnership between the Federal Government, the State, and the local community. Parents want the best for their children and they will take it wherever they can find it. We have the opportunity and the responsibility to provide these resources. That is what the Federal role is today. It may be expanded in the future, but today it is targeted to the neediest children.

The prime responsibility for education funding still remains with the State and local community. If there has been a failure—and there has been—in trying to bring substandard schools up to the point where they are going to be benefitting children, the blame lies with the States and local communities, as well as with the efforts the Federal government has made in the past. We are spending about \$400 billion a year, and with \$8.6 billion dedicated to title I. This works out to approximately 2 cents in terms of interventions directly with the neediest children.

Our elementary schools are much different than they were 10 or 15 years ago. We are bringing children who have special needs into our public schools and attempting to mainstream them. They take the test along with everybody else in the class. Schools are also dealing with a large population of students who do not speak English as a first language, which creates an increasing complexity in terms of having well-trained teachers. I recently went to the Revere High School, just outside of Boston, where there are 43 different languages being spoken by students.

These challenges are compounded by increased divisions of families, the explosion of substance abuse, and the growth of violence in society—all falling primarily on the same children and then we wonder why these students are not getting all A's and B's in school. Then the finger is pointed at the Federal Government saying, they have failed us on this—that is a simplistic explanation and observation about what has been happening to elementary and secondary schools across the nation.

We have been attempting to do the best we can, through strong accountability measures to give the parents the information and then ultimately empower them at the time, if a school has been failing, to make some choices and decisions on what they find to be in the best interests of their children. We are going to strengthen the supplementary services for children so that those children who have been found in need as a result of the tests are going to get the supplementary services.

Unless we provide the resources, we are only, according to the best judgment, now providing the additional services for probably 15 to 18 percent of the children in need. We are going to make sure that schools are held accountable. We are going to insist on a strong professional development opportunities for teachers.

I was recently in a school just outside of Quincy, Massachusetts, where they implemented professional development programs. They had a 100 percent turnout of teachers for this program. They say the thirst and interest of teachers in being able to have that professional development is replicated all across this country.

We ought to make these opportunities available for teachers, especially in the inner cities that do not have the kind of professional training, but in many instances, have dedicated teachers who are pouring their life into trying to serve children in need.

We are so easy to condemn these teachers where in most circumstances, they would be able to leave, and perhaps with less tension and danger, if they went into a different situation.

There are no easy answers. And to those who suggest that this legislation is going to answer our problems, we ought to take a very healthy sense of pause as we begin.

I will just say a final word about the investments in education. I can remember not long ago talking with Mary Robinson, President of Ireland, asking her about some of the things that gave her the greatest satisfaction as the President of Ireland. She told me a couple of years ago that she had just gone to the 10 best schools in Ireland. I asked where they were. She said they were in the poorest areas of Ireland.

I said: How so? That would not be the situation you would necessarily find here in the United States.

She said: We have virtual uniformity in terms of funding of the schools in Ireland.

Of course, that is not the case here. You find out that in most urban areas, they are spending about a third of what they spend in the more affluent communities. That happens to be a reality. That makes a great deal of difference in terms of both the physical structures, resources, training, and the programs and the atmosphere and the curriculum the children have.

She continued and said: The best teachers in Ireland go to these underserved areas because they find it the most challenging and because they find the children are the hungriest because they know that the key to getting out of many of these areas is an education. And most powerfully, the parents understand that. So they are engaged and involved.

They have had extraordinary results. That doesn't surprise me. If children had the opportunity and knew they were getting something that really was as good or the best, they would try to excel and succeed. If they knew they could get support services, they would make all of the additional efforts to try to be the kind of students their parents would be proud of. That is the lesson of history. That happens throughout the whole world. Why we don't think that will happen here is a great misunderstanding.

To do it, you have to do it right. Many of us on this side see that we are developing a formulation in terms of this legislation that will have both accountability, flexibility, and responsibility. It will have something that can make a significant and important difference in doing it right. Funding is going to be the key to whether those services are going to be there or not.

I will mention the contrast in funding between this side of the aisle and the Administration. We have, on all of the ESEA programs for fiscal year 2001, \$3.6 billion, a 24-percent increase. This year, the Administration offered a 3.5 percent increase, as compared to a 24-percent annual increase last year. In fiscal year 2001, the budget increase for the entire Department of Education, was \$6.5 billion, as compared to the Administrations proposed budget increase of \$2.5 billion, 5.9 percent.

Money isn't everything, but it is a clear indication of a nation's priorities.

We have had this debate where we have said that our No. 1 priority is going to be the tax reduction. That is our No. 1 priority. The President has said this is a top priority. Well, the point is, if it is a top priority and the first priority is a tax break, somewhere out there they have to meet. They ought to be reflected in the additional kind of resources to be able to fund these programs in a way that will make a difference for the children.

The reason I haven't lost some hope of having some assurances from the President is that I look at what happened with school funding in Texas. Between 1994 and 2000, funding went from

\$16.9 billion to \$27.5 billion, which is a 57-percent increase. We saw a corresponding enhancement in the children's achievement levels in Texas.

I hear the arguments from the other side that money isn't everything. This President saw the importance of investing in children and investing in the quality of teachers and others, and it has really made the difference.

So we will soon have the chance to debate these issues in greater detail. I hope that prior to that time we have a last best judgment from the President that will give assurances we are going to have the funding to enhance this change. I hope to include at least another third of the children in the area of title I. Then we can give an assurance to the American people that during this Presidential term he will fight for the complete funding for the title I program.

I think that would be an enormously powerful message. I daresay I think he could be assured of every vote for that full funding from this side of the aisle. I welcome the opportunity to join that. That would really give light to what we believe the children in this country need and deserve.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I wish to speak for just a moment about the issue of education. We are turning now to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization. This is critically important legislation.

The one thing I think it is important for us to say at the start of this debate is that education has worked in this country for a long time. There are some areas in which education has failed American children, but generally speaking, you cannot say that.

We live in a country that is blessed with opportunities that most countries have never had. In my judgment, that has happened because we have had a public education system—since before the independence of our country—that said: We are going to allow all young children to be whatever their God-given talent can allow them to be. That is called universal education. Every child coming into this country's school system is allowed to be whatever his or her God-given talent allows. That has really provided remarkable dividends for our country.

Think of where we have been and what we have done. It is quite a remarkable record. We survived a civil war. We survived a depression. We beat back the oppression of Naziism. In terms of technology, think of what we have done as a country. Both the spirit of Americans and our education combined have allowed us to split the atom. We have mapped the human genome. We have done so many things. We have spliced genes. We have invented plastics, the silicone chip, radar. We built airplanes and learned to fly them. We built rockets and flew to the Moon. We have cured small pox. We have cured polio.

When you think of what we have done in our country—we have created

telephones and television and the computers—it is quite remarkable.

One could ask the question, it seems to me, how did all of that happen in our country? Why didn't all that happen somewhere in downtown Tegucigalpa? It happened in our country because we have made a lot of the right choices for a long period of time in this country. We have an education system in this country that has produced remarkable thinkers, that has allowed the genius of every young child in this country to become what it can become.

Now we are poised in the first year of this new millennium to do even greater things. We come here debating education and trying to respond to the challenge of dealing with school systems that are failing because there are some that are not making the progress they should. But I think it is very important to point out that there are many school systems that are succeeding well beyond anyone's expectations.

There are a lot of ways to succeed. Some say, if you make the right investments, you can have good schools that are well repaired, classrooms that are of sufficient size, and enough quality teachers. You can make this education system work well in every part of this country.

There used to be a custom of building little red schoolhouses. When everyone thinks of schoolhouses, they think of a picture of the little red schoolhouse. I am told that the little red schoolhouse originated in the Northeastern States, and it originated for a particular reason. Schoolhouses originated as red because red paint was cheaper than any other color. So schoolhouses were painted red, I suppose, because the people at that time wanted to save money on those schools.

There are ways to save money on schools, to be sure. But it is not necessarily in the best interests of children if you save money by withdrawing the opportunity for a good, full, and balanced education.

My hope is that when we talk about this piece of legislation, we can emphasize the positive in areas where we agree—and there are plenty of them. President Bush has made a proposal that has, in my judgment, a lot of good things in it. He has also presented a proposal that is deficient and leaves out a lot of important things.

So what we ought to do is start with this premise: No. 1, much of our education system in this country is working, and working well. Some schools are failing. Reading achievement is up. The National Assessment of Educational Progress shows that during the last decade, reading achievement has significantly improved in all grades tested.

Is our reading achievement sufficient? Should it be better? Yes, it ought to be better. But testing shows we are on the right track. Mathematics and science achievement is up. Students are better prepared for college.

In the 1990s, the scores on both the SAT and the ACT have climbed steadily. Students are taking tougher courses. Between 1992 and 1997, the number of high school students taking advanced placement courses in all subjects increased by two-thirds.

Some will come to this debate—perhaps tomorrow morning—and say: We have this education recession. Woe is us. Our schools are failing. All across America, our schools are failing.

I think that is a disservice to our teachers and our schools. The fact is, we have a lot of wonderful teachers in the classroom. They are who we leave our children with every day, all day. I have been in many classrooms, and I think in almost every circumstance I have left that classroom with great admiration for those teachers who are committed, impassioned, and want to do a good job for those students.

But I have been in classrooms where teachers could not do a very good job because they had 35 children in the classroom—one teacher trying to keep track of 35 children and trying to provide some kind of individual educational opportunity. It is impossible with 35 children. We know it. You have to reduce class size to be more effective in educating children.

I have been in classrooms where the students' desks are an inch apart and where the building is 95 years old and was long ago condemned, where children can't have access to computers or the Internet because they do not have the capability of wiring those classrooms, and where you have 150 students and one water fountain and two bathrooms.

I have been in those schools. We know that is not an optimum way to teach children. So we ought to provide some assistance for the renovation of crumbling schools, for the renovation of those schools that are in disrepair.

Over half a century ago, those brave soldiers who fought and won the Second World War came back to this country and they fell in love. They got married and had children. They built schools all across this Nation. Those schools are now 50 and 60 years old. Those schools are in disrepair in many cases and need to be modernized. We need to do something to help make sure we remedy that.

Education is not some mysterious machine in which we pull some levers and turn some dials and we get it just right. Education has the element of three things, in my judgment, to work well: One, you have to have a teacher who knows how to teach; two, you have to have a student who really wants to learn; and, three, you have to have a parent involved in that student's education. If you do not have all three, it just does not work in almost all cases.

We need to do things to try to encourage the retention of good teachers and the development of new teachers. Some States are woefully inadequate when it comes to compensating teachers, and it is a shame. Teachers spend

all day with our children. I have children in sixth grade and eighth grade classes today. My children go to public schools, but I want them to go to good schools. Their public schools are good schools. They have wonderful, committed teachers. I want that to be the case in every part of our country.

One of the specific interests I have in the bill that we are going to be debating is the issuance of school report cards. I am joining a number of my colleagues—Republicans and Democrats—to work on a school report card that will go to parents, so that parents know which schools are failing and which are succeeding.

The fact is, we all get report cards on our kids. We know how our kids are doing in math, in science, civics. We know that because they go to school, they come back home, and then they get a report card every 6 weeks to 9 weeks. And that report card says: Here is how your son or daughter did in mathematics. And it is an A, B, C, D or, God forbid, an F, but it is an assessment of how that child is doing.

There is no similar uniform requirement for American parents or taxpayers to get a grade on how well their school is doing.

How is my school doing versus a school in the next county or another school in the same city, or how are the schools doing in my State versus school systems in another State. Don't we deserve the opportunity to see how well we are doing? Shouldn't we have an assessment of how well the schools are doing? How about a report card for schools? Some States have report cards, but their contents are wildly diverse. There is no consistency at all, and there is no capability for parents to get a good measurement.

School report cards ought to include graduation and retention rates. That has something to do with evaluating whether schools are serving our kids well. Qualifications of teachers, average class size, school safety, parental involvement, those are some of the pieces of information we can give parents and taxpayers to provide them an understanding of what we are getting from this school system of ours. Are we getting what we want from the school system? Are children getting what they need from the school system?

Our rural schools face some unique challenges that we need to help them address. Many of my colleagues come from areas where the need to reduce class size is crucial because there are so many children coming into the school system they can't handle them, but many rural schools have the opposite problem. Last week, I mentioned that my hometown is closing its high school. My hometown high school is closing. They had the last high school prom on April 7.

When I graduated many years ago, I was in a high school class of nine. Now, of course, there are not enough students in those four grades in that high school to continue the school. Those

kids will be going to neighboring towns to high school. They held their last prom and will hold those memories for many years, but the Regent High School will no longer exist.

In rural counties, the issue is: how do you pay for a school in which you have nine students in a grade or in some cases two or three students in a grade. That is a separate issue, one we should be concerned about as well.

There are many challenges. But in this debate, unlike some others, everyone will come to the floor wanting the same thing. We share exactly the same goal. We want to do well by our children and to have the finest school system in the world. Some will say: You can't throw money at it. I agree with that. But we can't expect to do what we want for our children without being willing to fund some of the needs as well. That is the other side of the coin.

Some will say: The way to solve this issue is just to provide vouchers and let parents take their children to private schools if they want to do that. Of course, those who say that went to a school that taught arithmetic that was different than my arithmetic. The numbers just don't add up. If you give someone a \$1,500 voucher and that is all, can a student show up at a private school and be welcomed with open arms. Does the private school say: Welcome, we can provide a really good education for \$1,500. That just does not happen. Private schools are much more expensive than that. If we are truly going to decide to leave no child behind, how can we possibly suggest that the solution to a bad school is to take the few kids out of that school who are given a voucher and leave all the rest of the kids behind. That is not "leave no child behind." That is just leaving whole schools behind.

We can do a lot better than that. The country expects us to do better than that.

Some will search for simple answers when, in fact, the answers are not always very simple. This requires our attention.

It is time to address this issue. It is time for us to debate, offer amendments, and reach a consensus in the Senate about what direction we want the country to go with respect to the education of our children.

I yield the floor.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. the clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FITZGERALD). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent there be a pe-

riod of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RETIREMENT OF CHIEF ROBERT LANGSTON

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the dedicated service of my good friend and committed public servant, Chief Robert E. Langston, upon his retirement from the U.S. Park Police Force. After 35 years on the force, including the last 10 years as chief, Robert Langston stepped down earlier this month a day prior to his 60th birthday, the mandatory retirement age for all Park Police officers. He leaves behind an impressive legacy of dedication, integrity, commitment, and success as the leader of one of the oldest law enforcement agencies in the country.

Robert Langston was born and raised in Washington, D.C., and joined the Park Police shortly after he graduated from Florida State University at the young age of 24 years old. Through hard work and dedication he gradually ascended to the impressive rank of U.S. Park Police Chief.

As chief, he oversaw the policing of the national park grounds in Washington, New York, and San Francisco. He worked tirelessly and sacrificed much in order to ensure the safety of the thousands who used or visited these grounds, and the agency flourished under his leadership. Chief Langston consistently went above the call of duty to make sure all Americans, and anyone visiting our Nation from abroad, would be safe while on the national park grounds.

He is to be commended for his exemplary service to the U.S. Park Police Department, and to this fine Nation. The force is stronger because of Chief Langston's dedicated leadership, and he can take great pride in all that he accomplished during his noteworthy tenure. Chief Langston has made countless contributions to the U.S. Park Police Department during his distinguished career. He has been a friend, teacher, and a model of excellence to the many fine men and women who had the honor to serve alongside Chief Langston. Bob Langston is a great man and a truly great American. He was an asset to the U.S. Park Police, and I am certain that though his presence will be missed, his influence will continue for generations to come.

BRINGING SOUTH DAKOTA'S STRENGTH TO THE WORLD'S CHALLENGES

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, today I share with my colleagues a summary of the key findings from our recent official congressional delegation trip to North Africa, Turkey, Greece and Macedonia. Those findings are outlined below, and they relate to opportunities